

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WATER BOARD FINES MENDOCINO COUNTY LANDOWNERS \$250,000 FOR DAMAGING SALMON HABITAT

Santa Rosa – The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board has fined Jon and Deann Green and Green Right O’Way Constructors Inc. \$250,000 for failing to comply with Board orders and for sediment discharges to watercourses from a 65-acre grading project east of Willits. Over the past three winters sediment from the site intermittently buried parts of Scott Creek and Tomki Creek, two important salmon habitat streams that flow to the Eel River.

The cleanup and enforcement actions on this site have been the result of extensive collaborative efforts between the Regional Water Board, the California Department of Fish and Game, the Mendocino County District Attorney’s Office, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the California Department of Forestry.

Regional Water Board staff first inspected the property in the spring of 2001 and saw that the Greens had stripped and graded a ridge top without proper planning, permitting, or design. Further inspections showed that the landowners had illegally filled several watercourses with thousands of cubic yards of soil, recontoured the ridge top with heavy equipment, and failed to adequately control erosion across the barren ridge top and on the fill slopes in the streams. These activities resulted in violations of the sediment waste discharge prohibitions contained in the water quality regulations for the North Coast Region.

The Executive Officer of the Regional Board required the Greens to clean up the discharges and threatened discharges of earth, or sediment, to Tomki and Scott Creeks and to submit various plans. The Greens failed to submit the required plans, and only took minimal efforts to clean up the previous discharges or to control additional dirt from impacting the creeks. Failure to provide the required plans and implement them resulted in significant additional discharges that could have been avoided.

Tomki Creek has received considerable publicly funded watershed restoration efforts and is considered an important salmon-producing stream by the California Department of Fish and Game.

For more information contact Catherine Kuhlman, Executive Officer, North Coast Regional Water Board, at (707) 576-2220, or 5550 Skylane Blvd, Santa Rosa CA, 95403.

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